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Foreign Crops and MARKETS

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CUBA'S FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CANNING REDUCED IN 1944

Production of processed fruits and vegetables in Cuba in 1944 is estimated at 24,000 tons, a decrease of 16 percent from that of 1943. The reduction was the result of small crops and unfavorable prices. Production between 1937 and 1941 was estimated at 18,000 tons annually. One-third consisted of tomatoes, one-third of canned pineapple, and one-fourth of guava products, and the remainder was miscellaneous. A record production of 33,000 tons was reached in 1942. Due to the tin-plate shortage, only 28,000 tons were processed in 1943.

Cuba's fruit-and-vegetable-canning industry before 1927 was limited almost entirely to manufacture of certain jams, jellies, and preserves to fill Cuba's demands for specialized tropical fruit products that were usually not available by importation. The Cuban Tariff Act of 1927 provided the stimulus for a short-lived canning boom. This Act changed the duty rates on canned products from an ad valorem to a specific basis, which resulted in duties 50 to 100 percent higher than formerly. This gave rise to optimistic expectation that Cuban products could compete successfully against similar imported products from the United States. Imports of canned pineapple and pimientos have been practically eliminated, but imports of other canned fruits and vegetables, which were used exclusively by the higher-income groups, were not seriously affected by the 1927 tariff rates.

Up to the end of 1929, 25 canneries were in operation, but only a few of these were modern, up-to-date establishments. Most of the canning consisted of native fruits, tomatoes, and pimientos. Canning provided an outlet for surplus raw products and a hedge against too low prices of fresh produce on the New York market. After the crash of 1929, many of the canneries were shut down, and others reduced their production because of reduced demand and inadequate capital.

Canned-tomato production was limited to domestic requirements, because the quality did not meet United States pure-food standards. Canned pineapple did not find a ready domestic market, and it was difficult to develop a market in the United States against Hawaiian competition. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, there was a reduction in pineapple shipments from Hawaii. Demand for Cuban pineapple then increased, but production was held down by the tin-plate shortage and ceiling prices in the United States.

One of the largest and best-equipped dehydrating plants in the world was built in 1943 with United States private capital to produce dehydrated beets and sweet potatoes for United States agencies and for relief purposes in liberated areas. Up to the present, this plant has been used only a small part of the time because of insufficient vegetables for processing. In 1944, 1,135 cases of sweet potatoes and 398 cases of dried beets were produced that met United States specifications. In addition, 96,776 pounds of white potatoes and 55,072 pounds of beets were produced that failed to meet United States specifications, and the contract was cancelled. The company is now concentrating on dried fruit.

Two new projects were developed in 1944; one to produce guava-juice concentrate for the United States Army for use in its food program, and the other to produce fresh-frozen-pineapple slices, all to be exported to the United States.

The hurricane which struck the Provinces of Habana and Pinar del Rio on October 18, 1944, did extensive damage to all the canneries in that area and caused considerable financial loss.

Canning production is limited by plant capacity and depends on harvest seasons of the individual crops, which combined make a complete cycle in a year.

	Canning season	
Commodity	Main	Practical limits
Tomatoes	January-March	December-May
Pimientos	February-March	January-April
Pineapples	April-July	January-December
Mangoes	June-July	June-July
Guavas	September-October	August-October

The only two crops competing for the simultaneous use of canning facilities are pineapples and mangoes. Other preserved fruits, such as coconuts, papaya, and mamey, are available almost the year round and are likewise canned on a small scale throughout the year.

Pineapples constitute the second most important fruit crop in Cuba, being exceeded only by bananas. They are canned only when the fruit is too ripe or too small to be shipped, and when necessary to provide a hedge against low prices in New York. The percentage of the crop diverted to canning, however, has increased steadily since 1928. Production had a set-back during the depression years, but by 1937, 20 percent of the crop was being canned. By 1940 the proportion had been increased to 35 percent, and by 1943 to 60 percent. In 1944 this trend was reversed because of unfavorable ceiling prices on canned pineapple in the United States, and because of the excellent prices paid for fresh fruit in New York and other cities.

PINEAPPLES: Production in Cuba, 1944 with comparisons

YEAR	PRODUCTION	EXPORTS			CONSUMPTION
		FRESH	CANNED	BRINED	
	1,000 crates	*1,000 crates*	*1,000 crates*	*1,000 crates*	*1,000 crates*
1937-1940 average	1,172	594	24	448	2,238
1941	979	860	36	481	2,345
1942	439	1,329	54	456	2,278
1943	630	1,832	26	622	3,110
1944 a/ ..	766	314	19	275	1,374

Compiled from official sources. Converted to crates of fresh fruit as follows: Fresh, 80 pounds; canned, 2-1/2 crates of fresh per case of 41 pounds; brined, crates of 66 pounds. Consumption is estimated at 25 percent of exports.
a/ First 6 months only.

The Cuban canners pack their pineapples as sliced in light or heavy sirup, tid-bits, juice, and crushed. The last-named product is packed in juice for ice cream manufacture, as crushed pineapple in sirup, as topping, and as preserves. In 1943 and 1944, canners produced topping almost exclusively, because of favorable prices. Frozen pineapple was first produced in 1944, when it was shipped to the United States under refrigeration and distributed through frozen-food dealers in Florida. About 500,000 pounds were produced that year. The company engaged in its production hopes to increase the 1945 output. There is no outlet for frozen foods in Cuba, so the entire production is for export. A limited amount of pineapple in brine is shipped in barrels to the United States.

Cuban production of canned tomatoes is exclusively for domestic consumption and depends on the amount the domestic market will absorb. The season usually extends from February through April, and sometimes May. The largest pack on record was in 1942 when 590,000 cases were packed, nearly doubling the amount packed the two previous seasons. The lack of tin plate, together with a short crop, reduced the 1943 pack. The pack in 1944, although small because of the attractive prices offered for fresh tomatoes in the New York market, was sufficient to cover domestic requirements. Tomatoes for canning are not field-ripened but are culls left over from those shipped to the auction markets. They are ripened in the sun and then processed.

The tomato paste produced in Cuba is usually so thin that the density has to be increased by adding pumpkin or similar other materials. Exports of Cuban paste to the United States have been small because it contains these other materials and because it does not meet specified standards. A plant at Colon produced tomato puree in 1944 and this product was all exported to the United States.

TOMATOES: Production in Cuba, January-June 1944, with comparisons

YEAR	PRODUCTION	EXPORTS		CONSUMPTION	
		FRESH	CANNED	FRESH a/	CANNED b/
	Short tons	*Short tons*	*Short tons*	*Short tons*	*Short tons*
1937-1940 average	24,574	47	2,000	5,901	32,522
1941	23,697	125	2,000	6,896	32,718
1942	11,159	65	2,000	12,056	25,280
1943	3,284	317	2,000	5,322	10,923
1944 c/ ..	9,453	3	1,000	5,165	15,621

Compiled from official statistics. Gross weights of fresh and canned tomato products without conversion or allowance for waste.
a/ Small summer tomatoes used in cooking.
b/ Estimated from reports of principal can manufacturers and canned-tomato producers. Cases converted at 41 pounds per case.
c/ First 6 months only.

Total production of guava is estimated at 200 million pounds. Of that quantity, however, only 90 million pounds are in readily accessible areas, but the demand has not warranted picking that quantity. The normal production of guava products is between 8 and 10 million pounds per year. The guava shrub grows wild in most sections of the island and as a rule is not eaten in the fresh state because of the many small, hard seeds scattered throughout the pulp, but it is used in many processed products. The crop matures during August and September and is made into guava pulp by small processing plants, which seal it in 5-gallon cans. In this form it provides a year-round supply for further processing.

Guava paste is made by cooking the fruit and removing the seeds to form a puree. The puree is mixed with sugar and boiled down to proper consistency, after which it is poured and allowed to cool in wooden-box molds lined with waxed paper or cellophane. Sometimes guava jelly is placed in the bottom of the box before the guava paste is poured. After it is cooled it can be removed from the box and labelled. It is usually packed in packages of 1-1/2 and 2-1/4 pounds.

Guava peel is made by cutting the raw fruit in half, removing the center pulp, and cooking the shells with sugar sirup and artificial coloring. It is canned in No. 2 or No. 2-1/2 cans. The pulp that has been removed can be used for paste. Guava jelly is made by using either raw or partly cooked guavas, which are pressed in a cider press to extract the juice. Sugar is then added to the juice, after which it is cooked to proper consistency and poured into wooden molds to cool. A new product, known as "guava juice, jelly base," first developed by an American firm in 1944, is used as a vitamin C fortifier and as a jelling agent for jellies and jams. No sugar is added.

Other products are of little importance in the canning industry. Mangoes were canned experimentally in 1943 and on a small commercial scale in 1944. The product has a texture similar to the peach, with a delicate mango flavor. Pimientos have been canned since 1939. Prior to that time, Cuba had imported its pimientos from Spain. Other fruit products manufactured on a small scale are orange marmalade, canned papaya, stewed dried prunes, preserved coconut, and preserved orange peel.

The outlook for Cuba's canning industry as a whole is uncertain. Because of high prices paid for fresh pineapple for shipment to the United States, and competition from Hawaii, particularly with respect to yields and the United States tariff on canned pineapple, Cuban canners are likely to have difficulties in continuing to produce for export at a profit. Tomatoes will probably be canned only to meet domestic requirements, but the production of guava products may continue to expand.

Ruth G. Tucker

FRENCH MOROCCO'S VEGETABLE-OIL SUPPLY BELOW REQUIREMENTS

French Morocco's vegetable-oil shortage continues to be a serious problem in spite of the efforts made by the Protectorate Government to increase oilseed acreage. The 1944 harvest of oleaginous crops, with the exception of cottonseed, was much smaller than that of the previous year. Morocco's total supply of vegetable oil from 1944 crops, including olive oil, may not exceed 6,500 short tons, which represents about 25 percent of annual domestic requirements. In an attempt to provide sufficient supplies for the country, the Director of Economic Affairs has announced that a decree of 1942 will be enforced during the current season. The original decree stated that 10 percent of all cultivated land must be planted to oilseeds; the modified version requires that only those farmers actively utilizing 5 acres or more plant 10 percent to oil-bearing crops. Producers meeting requirements will be granted a priority on oilseed-cake allotments amounting to 70 kilograms (154 pounds) for each quintal (220.46 pounds) of seed delivered, together with a price differential in favor of the grower in contrast to prices charged nonproducers, or each grower may have the choice of either one kilogram (2.2046 pounds) of sugar or one kilogram of oil for each quintal of seed delivered.

Since financing the crop appears to be the principal difficulty to be overcome, the Government decided that payment in full for all former crops should be made before the end of September 1944, and payment for the 1944-45 harvest will be made in cash at the time of delivery.

FRENCH MOROCCO: Production of specified oilseeds, 1941-1944

YEAR	FLAXSEED	CASTOR BEANS	COTTON-SEED	SUNFLOWER SEED
	1,000 bushels	*1,000 pounds*	*1,000 pounds*	*1,000 pounds*
1941 .,	1,002	a/	1,102	a/
1942 ..	b/ 1,039	c/ 300	1,889	c/ 6,600
1943 ..	984	220	2,205	13,228
1944 ..	b/ 303	331	2,646	d/ 3,197

Compiled from official sources.
a/ Not available.
b/ Revised.
c/ Unofficial estimate.
d/ Estimate of quantity crushed.

Flaxseed production in 1944 was approximately 70 percent below that of the previous year, due partly to a reduction in acreage, although a great deal of the seed was damaged by rain at time of harvest. Cottonseed output was large because of increased cotton acreage. The quantity available for crushing is only slightly greater than that of 1943, as there was some loss from spoilage due to insufficient storage facilities. Cottonseed that was not considered desirable for conversion into oil was burned as fuel. Castor-bean production has met with little success in Morocco and may be discontinued for the present. Sunflower cultivation has not been encouraging. In 1943, approximately 6,000 short tons of seed were produced on 32,000 acres. Of this quantity, less than 1,500 tons were available for crushing, since poor transportation facilities prevented delivery to mills. As a result, farmers fed the seed to their chickens.

Peanut oil is imported, and consumption is increasing, as many people prefer it to olive oil and the cost is much less. Prior to 1939, Morocco imported fairly large quantities of both peanuts and peanut oil from French West Africa. *Regina H. Boyle*

DAIRY PRODUCTION LOW IN REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

Production of milk and dairy products in the Republic of Panama is small and is insufficient to supply the needs of the population. While some milk for liquid consumption is produced in the vicinities of the cities of Panamá and Colón, consumers as a whole are dependent upon canned milk, most of which has to be imported.

The development of the dairy industry in the Republic of Panama has been slow. There are few strictly dairy herds in the country. In all, milk-producing cows made up only about 10 percent of the entire cattle population of 334,000 head, according to the census of 1942. The dairy industry is most intensive in the areas surrounding the Canal cities, but it has not expanded sufficiently to meet requirements. Because of an inadequate domestic supply, the Republic has imported large quantities of dairy products, and within the past 2 years it has also become necessary to import dairy cows for the purpose of supplementing the limited domestic production.

If the economy of the Republic continues to develop, the resulting increase in demand for dairy products probably will exceed any increase in production. Expansion of the industry will depend upon: (1) Improvement in feed supplies and feeding practices, including proper care of young stock; (2) better management of the milking herd, including control of parasites and diseases; (3) progressive breeding programs; (4) improvement in handling, processing, and distribution of milk; (5) improvement in roads and means of transportation from regions favoring production.

The 1942 production of fresh milk in the Republic of Panama has been estimated at 57 million pounds. None is exported. While no figures are available on the consumption of fresh milk, calculations indicate that it is below the requirements of good nutrition. The inadequate supply and the resulting high price of this commodity serve to check consumption. Consumers customarily pay 22 to 25 cents per quart for milk at the store.

One reason for the lack of development in dairy production has been the migration of workers to nonagricultural occupations paying higher wages. Cattle feed for commercial dairies also is expensive, most of it being imported. The dry season, January through May, further adds to the difficulties of the feed situation. To reduce the cost of milk production, it will be necessary for the Republic to raise more home-grown feeds to supplement pastures during the dry season, and to breed cattle for higher milk production - all of which may serve as a means of lowering prices, thus encouraging consumption.

Since the establishment of a condensery at Nata in 1938, a part of the milk produced in the Republic has been diverted to the manufacture of canned milk. The production of this plant only partially meets the requirements for evaporated and condensed milk, which are important items in the Panamanian diet. The deficit is met by imports, consisting largely of evaporated milk, inasmuch as no duty is levied on the import of this item. In the past, consumers have shown some preference for sweetened condensed milk, but its popularity has declined in recent years, due to the high price. Canned milk has many uses in the Republic - for the feeding of infants, as cream for coffee and cereal, for ice cream, and similar uses. Hotels and restaurants, even of the highest type, serve only canned milk.

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA: Consumption of canned milk, 1941-1944

ITEM	1941	1942	1943	1944 a/
	1,000 pounds	*1,000 pounds*	*1,000 pounds*	*1,000 pounds*
Evaporated -				
Production ...	1,309	368	63	12
Imports	1,358	5,486	3,344	3,405
Total	2,667	5,854	3,407	3,417
Condensed - b/				
Production ...	805	757	878	652
Powdered -				
Imports	815	1,244	1,173	846

Official sources.
a/ First 9 months only.
b/ No condensed milk is imported, as a protective tariff has been imposed on this commodity for the benefit of local industry.

The Republic manufactures very little butter. The production of this commodity is confined to a few farmers who make it for their own use. Its manufacture on any commercial scale is hindered by climatic conditions. Consumers are dependent upon imports, much of which come from Argentina.

Most of the cheese consumed in the Republic also is imported, though many farmers manufacture a white cheese for their own use and for sale to nearby stores. In addition, some Swiss cheese is said to be manufactured by a small factory in the Province of Chiriqui.

REPUBLIC OF PANAMA: Imports of butter and cheese, 1941-1944

ITEM	1941	1942	1943	1944 a/
	1,000 pounds	*1,000 pounds*	*1,000 pounds*	*1,000 pounds*
Butter	1,985	1,834	2,586	992
Cheese	356	569	558	413

Official sources. a/ First 9 months only.

Total milk production in 1945 is not expected to differ from last year, and no changes are anticipated in the quantity of fluid milk going to the civilian population. Domestic production of evaporated milk probably will total 254,000 pounds, while the output of condensed milk very likely will reach 893,000 pounds. If the military personnel in this area should be reduced, however, more fluid milk might be released for processing.

Some reconstituting of milk from powdered milk, sweet butter, and water has been carried out in Panama during the war years. With the relative high cost of fresh milk in the urban centers, the reconstituting of milk from products imported is a means of bringing about a desired increase in consumption of dairy products. The reconstituted milk sells for about 10 cents per quart in comparison to 22 to 25 cents per quart for fresh milk. There is considerable demand for ice cream made from mixes containing imported powdered milk, as fresh milk and cream are not available for ice cream manufacture.

Regina M. Murray

LATE COMMODITY DEVELOPMENTS

GRAINS, GRAIN PRODUCTS, AND FEEDS

ARGENTINA AUTHORIZES RESALE OF GOVERNMENT CORN STOCKS

The Argentine Government recently authorized the Regulating Board of Agricultural Production to resell its holdings of 1943-44 corn to producers, all sales to be consummated by February 28, 1945. After that date, it was reported, the Board was to be free to dispose of its stocks in the open market.

The selling price was set at 4.95 pesos per 100 kilograms (about 37 cents per bushel), which is one peso or about 8 cents per bushel less than the price paid to producers. The minimum guaranteed price, fixed originally at 5.20 pesos per 100 kilograms, was increased to 5.95 pesos early in May, when the crop was estimated to be smaller than had been indicated at the time the original price was set.

Corn stocks held by the Board were reported to be some 100,000,000 bushels. The resale order would thus make quantities of corn available for feed where needed, as the result of the extended drought.

SWITZERLAND REPORTS REDUCED WINTER GRAIN SEEDINGS

Fall plowing and the seeding of winter grains in Switzerland were delayed as the result of unfavorable weather. The rainfall in November was more than double the normal amount for that month. In addition to the adverse weather, a shortage of labor and of draft power handicapped fall operations

The 1945 bread-grain crop is, therefore, not expected to be up to schedule. Increased seedings of spring wheat may, in part, make up the arrears, but not fully compensate for the reduction in winter acreage. Larger acreages of spring grains such as barley and oats are also planned.

On the other hand, a general shortage of seed grains in Switzerland is reported. This applies not only to wheat but spring rye, also barley and oats. In order to safeguard the supply of wheat for spring seedings, no further millings of the Huron (a spring) variety may be made.

URUGUAY HARVESTS SMALL WHEAT CROP

The wheat crop recently harvested in Uruguay was the smallest reported since 1932, according to reports. The poor outturn, placed at approximately 6 million bushels, was due mainly to the unfavorable weather and rust damage. A yield of that size combined with existing stocks would provide a supply about 2.6 million bushels short of the country's requirements, according to current estimates.

The price to be paid producers for the 1944-45 crop has been fixed at 7.90 pesos per 100 kilograms at Montevideo (about $1.13 per bushel in United States currency) for sound, clean, sacked wheat. The new price is higher than the 1943-44 rate, which was on an ascending scale, starting with 6.65 pesos in December 1943 and reaching its maximum of 7.35 pesos in November 1944.

A decree passed in December 1944 provides for the control of wheat marketings. The regulation of the decree was made the responsibility of a special committee.

CHILEAN RICE ACREAGE AGAIN INCREASED

The first official estimate for the 1944-45 rice acreage in Chile forecasts an area of 112,000 acres, which indicates a 25-percent gain over the 91,000 acres planted the preceding year. This increase also denotes a continuation of the marked expansion of the Chilean rice acreage in the past 4 years. A large gain has occurred every year since 1940-41, when the rice acreage was less than one-third as large as this year's seeded area.

Production this season, however, may not show an increase proportionate with the larger rice acreage. Unofficial Chilean forecasts vary from 7,800,000 to 8,800,000 bushels, against the revised official figure of 7,400,000 bushels in 1943-44. These estimates reflect a low yield, ranging from 70 to 79 bushels per acre, compared with the high yield of 84 bushels last year. The weather has been unfavorable for rice cultivation during the current season. Adverse weather during the planting and growing seasons was followed by a wind and rain storm in February, which further damaged a large part of the rice crop.

Chilean rice production likewise has gained steadily in recent years. The 1943-44 crop of 7,400,000 bushels (215 million pounds) was more than three times the 1940-41 production of 2,200,000 bushels (65 million pounds). Most of the rice from the larger crop last season was either consumed domestically or carried over for consumption. Domestic rice consumption rose in 2 years from about 60 million pounds to nearly 90 million in 1944.

Despite the large gain in rice production last year, only 60 million pounds were exported from Chile in 1944, compared with 51 million a year earlier. The principal destinations were Bolivia and Peru rather than Cuba, which heretofore has been the most important outlet for Chilean rice.

CHILE: Rice exports by country, 1942-1944

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION	1942	1943	1944
	Million pounds	*Million pounds*	*Million pounds*
Cuba	9	31	7
Bolivia	7	8	23
Peru	a/	9	15
Panama	2	a/	10
Curazao	0	1	3
Others	1	2	2
Total	19	51	60

Preliminary trade statistics.
a/ Less than 500,000 pounds.

PANAMANIAN RICE CROP NEAR RECORD

The 1944 rice crop in the Republic of Panama is estimated at 2,300,000 bushels, which is above the production last year, but below the record harvest of 3,050,000 bushels in 1942. The rice area was 15,000 acres smaller than in 1942, the latest year for which statistics previously were compiled. The yield of 25 bushels per acre in 1944, however, was almost as high as that of the record 1942 crop. The largest production this season was reported in the Provinces of Veraguas, Chiriquí, and Panamá, respectively.

As a result of the present Governmental program to assist agriculture, rice production may be increased in the future. The Department of Agricultural Development maintains field offices in the principal agricultural centers, which provide technical information, distribute seed, fertilizers, and agricultural implements, loaned or sold at cost. Agricultural authorities report that production reasonably soon may meet the Panamanian demand and perhaps allow some rice for exportation to other Central American countries.

Even though rice production in Panama has increased in recent years, rice imports of about 8 million pounds annually are still necessary. Nearly all imported rice during the war has come from Ecuador.

COTTON AND OTHER FIBERS

COTTON SUPPLY SITUATION IN SPAIN IMPROVES

The arrival in Spain of 30,000 bales (of 500 pounds gross) of cotton in December and nearly 67,000 bales in January enabled spinning mills to begin operations in December on a basis of 6 days a week with two shifts a day. Operations of weaving mills, however, were reduced to 4 days a week, half of them operating two shifts a day and the others, one shift. The Spanish Consorcio Industrial Textil Algodonero concluded a purchase contract on December 22 for 60,000 bales of American cotton and another on January 25 for 35,500 bales.

Imports of 66,600 bales of cotton in January included 34,300 from the United States, 19,500 from Brazil, and 12,800 from the Belgian Congo. The total of 375,000 bales for 1944 is the largest since 1935, when 447,000 bales were imported.

SPAIN: Imports of cotton by countries of origin, 1944 with comparisons
(In bales of 500 pounds gross)

COUNTRY	AVERAGE 1939-1941 a/	1942	1943	1944
	1,000 bales	*1,000 bales*	*1,000 bales*	*1,000 bales*
United States	92.3	b/	184.9	221.1
Brazil	32.7	194.4	98.8	30.3
Belgian Congo	3.5	89.5	71.2	99.4
Argentina ...	50.5	0.3	0	0
Egypt	18.2	0	0	15.7
Others	8.0	6.5	1.1	8.9
Total	205.2	290.7	356.7	375.4

Compiled from official sources.
a/ 3-year average. No data available for civil war years, 1936-1938.
b/ Only 16 bales.

WEEKLY COTTON PRICES ON FOREIGN MARKETS

The following table shows certain cotton price quotations on foreign markets, converted at current rates of exchange.

COTTON: Price of certain foreign growths and qualities in specified markets

MARKET LOCATION, KIND, AND QUALITY	1945	PRICE PER POUND
		Cents
Alexandria (spot)		
Ashmouni, F.G.F.	2-15	29.23
Giza 7, F.G.F.	2-15	32.99
Karnak, F.G.F.	2-15	32.36
Bombay (March futures)		
Jarila	2-16	16.92
Bombay (spot)		
Kampala, East African	2-16	36.31
Buenos Aires (spot)		
Type B	2-17	14.72
Lima (spot)		
Tanguis, Type 5	2-17	15.47
Recife (spot)		
Mata, Type 5	2-16	12.68
Sertao, Type 5	2-16	13.50
São Paulo (spot)		
São Paulo, Type 5	2-16	13.25
Torreon (spot)		
Middling, 15/16"	2-17	18.11

Compiled from weekly cables from representatives abroad.

TOBACCO

GREECE HAS TOBACCO FOR EXPORT

Stocks of leaf tobacco in Greece available for eventual export are estimated at from 44 to 55 million pounds, of which about 13 million pounds consist of manipulated leaf from the 1943 crop, and the balance of unmanipulated leaf from the 1944 harvest. Most of the manipulated leaf is reported to be held in the Serres and Alexandroupolis Districts, and corresponds with grades normally exported to the United States.

During the 3-1/2 years of occupation, Germany took about 185 million pounds of Greek leaf, principally from crops prior to 1942. Prices paid for leaf were held down through price-control measures and exchange arrangements, and many farmers, finding tobacco-growing unprofitable, turned to the cultivation of other crops. It is estimated that growers received on the average no more than 5 percent of the value of leaf sold. Stocks of old-crop leaf at the time of liberation in late 1944 were comparatively small.

The production of tobacco in Greece in 1944, including areas formerly held by Bulgaria, is estimated at 55 million pounds, or about one-half the average production during the years immediately preceding enemy occupation of the country.

FRUITS, VEGETABLES, AND NUTS

MEXICO'S PINEAPPLE GROWERS EXPECT BUMPER CROP

Pineapple growers in Isla, Vera Cruz, and Loma Bonita, Oaxaca, the principal pineapple producing regions of Mexico, are preparing to harvest the largest crop in their history. It is estimated that production in Loma Bonita will be between 22,000 and 28,000 tons. In Isla production will be around 26,000 tons. Thus, the combined production of these two regions will be between 48,000 and 54,000 tons, an increase over the 1943 and 1944 crops totaling 44,000 and 46,000 tons, respectively. The worst problem of pineapple growers is transportation. Loma Bonita is located on the Isthmus Railway, and shortage of cars will result in loss of fruit by spoilage. There is almost a complete absence of refrigerator cars. Growers are forced to ship by whatever means is available. Only one refrigerator car was loaded last year, and there is no indication of improvement in the coming season. One solution is to ship pineapples by sea. If this can be accomplished, growers in the Isla area are more advantageously located than those in the Loma Bonita region. At present, growers are planning to ship 660 tons weekly through Coatzacoalcos. If this can be done it will ease to some extent the demand on rail facilities.

Most of the pineapples are exported to the United States. It is estimated that Isla and Loma Bonita together will be able to export around 28,000 tons if transportation is available.

Growers and buyers are increasingly concerned over black rot caused by the fungus thielaviopsis paradoxa, which has become more prevalent than last year. Fruit showing indications of this disease are refused entry into the United States. This condition probably could be remedied by improving packing methods and shortening the time of transit.

PINEAPPLES: Production and exports, 1944 with comparisons

YEAR	PRODUCTION	EXPORTS
	Short tons	Short tons
Average 1937-1941	41,536	8,722
1942	63,789	10,011
1943	66,939	16,326
1944	71,871	13,741

Official sources.

SHIPMENTS OF VEGETABLES FROM MEXICO LARGER THAN USUAL

Shipments of vegetables from the West Coast of Mexico to the United States and Canada for the season ended January 31, 1945, were 69,432,000 pounds, or 82 percent more than during the corresponding period of 1944, and more than twice as much as for 1943. Increases in shipments are attributed to the favorable weather throughout the growing areas of Sonora and Sinaloa. Effective at noon January 27, 1945, and extending for 3 days to noon January 30, the Office of Defense Transportation placed an embargo on all rail-freight shipments to the northeastern section of the United States and Canada. As a result, the market outlet for Mexican vegetables was restricted somewhat during that period.

MEXICAN WEST COAST: Shipments of vegetables to United States, seasons through January, 1942-43 to 1944-45

VEGETABLE	1942-43	1943-44	1944-45
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds
Tomatoes	27,955	34,515	62,511
Peas, green	2,473	1,866	4,145
Peppers, green	1,186	1,658	2,682
Eggplant	88	115	43
Squash	0	23	31
Beans, green	0	0	20
Total	31,702	38,177	69,432

Official sources.

SUGAR

PRODUCTION OF SUGAR IN SURINAM DOWN

Production of sugar in Surinam for 1945 is estimated at 3,300 short tons, a decrease of 16 percent from the 1944 production of 3,900 tons. This area produced 15,000 tons in 1942 and exported 10,000 tons. Scarcity of labor is the controlling factor in production, and this situation probably will continue as long as workers find employment in Army camps and in cities. As a result, some imports will be needed to meet minimum consumption requirements. Cane is usually cut and ground twice a year, but the demand for sugar is so great that cutting and grinding on certain plantations will probably continue throughout the year as in 1944. Sugar in Surinam is rationed at the rate of 2 pounds per person for a 3-week period.

LIVESTOCK AND ANIMAL PRODUCTS

AUSTRALIAN CATTLE AND HOG NUMBERS UP, SHEEP AND HORSES DOWN

Cattle and hog numbers in Australia for the year ended with March 1944 continued the upward trend of recent years, according to the livestock estimate for that date released toward the end of the year. Sheep continued the decline first noticed in 1943, and horses fell to the lowest level of the past 55 years. The adverse effect on feed and water supplies caused by drought conditions that prevailed throughout most of 1944, will have a tendency to check expansion in cattle and hogs and will probably cause further decreases in sheep and horses.

Cattle numbers last March had reached 14,142,000, which was an increase of 1 percent above the preceding year and 10 percent above 1939. Beef cattle totaled 9,228,000, or 65 percent of the total, and dairy cattle 4,914,000, or the remaining 35 percent. The number of cows and heifers expected to calve in 1944 was 4,700,000, comprising 2,825,000 for dairy purposes and 1,880,000 for beef.

Hogs had reached 1,747,000 by March 31, 1944, but still had not recovered from the sharp drop that occurred in 1941-42 when uncertainty concerning future British requirements of pork and bacon affected unfavorably the price situation. The number of sows and boars was slightly smaller as of March 31, 1944, whereas the number of slaughter stock and young pigs was larger.

Sheep decreased to 123,174,000 from the all-time record number of 125,189,000 reported in March 1942. It is officially estimated that 48,333,000 ewes will be mated in the 1944-45 season compared with a total of 49,929,000 in 1943-44. The number of aged sheep reported on March 31, 1944, was 12,842,000, or 845,000 more than in 1943.

Australia's stock of horses showed a 5-percent reduction to 1,449,000 as of March 31, 1944. Draft horses made up 758,000 of the total; other horses one year and older, 625,000; and foals under one year, 66,000.

AUSTRALIA: Number of livestock in March 1944 with comparisons

YEAR	CATTLE	SHEEP	HOGS	HORSES
	1,000 head	*1,000 head*	*1,000 head*	*1,000 head*
January 1-				
1939 a/ ..	12,862	111,058	1,156	1,724
1940 a/ ..	13,080	119,305	1,455	1,699
1941 a/ ..	13,256	122,694	1,797	1,666
March 31 -				
1942	13,561	125,189	1,477	1,611
1943	14,005	124,615	1,563	1,518
1944	14,142	123,174	1,747	1,449

Official sources.

a/ Reported as of December 31, preceding year. Estimates for all Australia are now reported as of March 31. Formerly some States reported as of that date, but the total for Australia as a whole was given as of December 31 of the preceding year.

CUBAN GOVERNMENT TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE BEEF CATTLE

The Cuban Ministry of Agriculture has recently established an Animal Industry Section within its Division of Industries, especially for the promotion of the cattle industry. Breeding animals are to be imported under Government sponsorship.

The ban on the slaughter of bulls, which was suspended in July 1944 on account of the scarcity of beef, is to be reestablished on July 1, 1945. The Ministry of Agriculture hopes to promote production of good beef steers of improved quality for domestic consumption and for post-war export. Also, the shortage of fats makes it desirable to feed cattle to heavier weights so as to increase the production of tallow. Cuban consumers prefer lean beef, and thus very little attention has been given heretofore to the production of quality beef steers.

DROUGHT SHARPLY REDUCES ARGENTINE BUTTER OUTPUT

Poor pastures in December and January in the butter-producing districts of Santa Fé, Entré Ríos and Córdoba adversely affected Argentine butter production. December production was 15 percent below December 1943, and January production was probably even more adversely affected. Drought conditions, particularly in the producing Provinces, were broken by helpful, although not fully adequate, rains on January 25 and 26. These and subsequent rains may bring about good pasture conditions for late summer and early autumn, with corresponding beneficial effect on butter production.

Exports of butter in December showed a substantial improvement over the light exports in November, but remained well below the exports of December 1943. For the first 4 months (September-December) of the current production season, exports of butter, cheese, and casein have all remained well below the quantities exported during the same period a year earlier.

Issuance of butter-export permits was suspended from late August until November 9, 1944. From that date, permits have been issued under a system of quotas that has required considerable paper work and presented many difficulties. A new way of awarding export permits was adopted in a decree of January 17, 1945. The National Commission of the Milk Industry will, before the 10th of each month, estimate the probable production of butter one month in advance, and on the basis of this information, together with statistics of stocks and domestic consumption, will adopt an export quota for the following period of 30 days beginning on the 16th of each month. This quota will be distributed among exporters on the basis of application, proof of past sales, and other information. Application for export permits must be made by exporters between the 5th and 10th of each month and will be issued on the 15th of the month. These permits will be valid for 30 days.

ARGENTINA: Production and exports of dairy products, September-December, 1943 and 1944

	SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER			
ITEM	PRODUCTION		EXPORTS	
	1943	1944	1943	1944
	1,000 pounds	*1,000 pounds*	*1,000 pounds*	*1,000 pounds*
Butter	42,870	34,253	19,708	5,672
Cheese	58,199	61,074	14,405	5,271
Casein	27,473	22,537	26,890	22,652

Official sources.

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